

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Gov't to give pork bosses sole power over line speed

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 33 SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

## 'New York Times' changes its 'story,' says race-baiting can topple Trump

BY ROY LANDERSEN

The owners and editors at the *New York Times*, long one of the capitalist rulers' central media outlets, are in the midst of a wrenching shift in the "story" they try to peddle daily.

For the last three years, like most of the liberals and middle-class left, they have relied on the witch hunt led by former FBI boss Robert Mueller to impeach or indict President Donald Trump. Their pages have been filled with harangues against Trump and against the workers who either voted for him or decided — after looking at both Trump and his main bourgeois opponent, Hillary Clinton, who called them "deplorables" — to sit that one out.

But now Executive Editor Dean Baquet told a 75-minute rancorous staff meeting, recorded and leaked to *Slate*, that they all had to realize, "Holy shit, Bob Mueller is not going to do it."

So, Baquet said, they have to change their "story."

"How do we write about race in a thoughtful way, something we haven't done in a large way in a long time," he

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## Workers in Puerto Rico face crisis of colonial rule

Protests oust governor, spur debate on way forward



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Yasmin Morales, from family that live by fishing, describes conditions in El Negro area of Yabucoa in Puerto Rico to Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party 2016 presidential candidate Aug. 17. The capitalist parties are like "sharks going after the small fish," Morales said.

BY SETH GALINSKY  
AND ALYSON KENNEDY

YABUCOA, Puerto Rico — When she returned to what was left of her home in the small El Negro neighborhood overlooking the sea after Hurricane Maria in September 2017, Yasmin Morales looked up at the nearby

hills. "There wasn't a leaf on a tree," she told Socialist Workers Party members on a solidarity and reporting trip

### EYEWITNESS REPORT

here Aug. 23.

Many people say that storm exposed the widespread poverty in the

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## Miners win support in fight against Blackjewel

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Coal miners laid off July 1 by bankrupt Blackjewel Coal have vowed to maintain their encampment on railroad tracks in Cumberland, Harlan County, to prevent coal bosses from moving coal out of the Cloverlick No. 3 mine.

"We're tired, but we're going to hang in there," Blackjewel miner Chris Sexton, one of the workers who began the protest, told the *Militant* by phone Aug. 25.

The miners began blocking the tracks July 29 when they found out Blackjewel was trying to move out 20,000 tons of coal worth more than a million dollars after the company had laid off miners and workers' paychecks bounced. Begun by a handful of miners with encouragement from union rail workers, the tent city encampment has received support of workers, small business owners and others.

Blackjewel's bankruptcy affected 1,700 workers in Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia and in the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. At an Aug. 23 bankruptcy court hearing in Charleston, West Virginia, Blackjewel owners requested

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## 'We need to organize workers to defend environment, safety'



Militant/Lisa Potash

Rachele Fruit, right, SWP candidate for Atlanta School Board, talks with Judy Renfold at Aug. 2 protest against pollution by Sterigenics plant in Smyrna, Georgia.

BY JANET POST

"It's only by organizing a fighting workers' movement and using union power that we can prevent the bosses from poisoning the air, water and soil,"

Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Atlanta School Board, told Belinda Aycock who was attending a town hall meeting of several hundred in Covington, Georgia, Aug. 20. The meeting was held to discuss carcinogenic emissions coming from the BD Bard plant there.

"I think they should shut it down," Aycock said.

"Yes, until it can be operated safely," Fruit replied, "and workers there should be guaranteed full pay during the closure."

BD Bard, which employs some 1,000 workers, is one of two plants that have been emitting ethylene oxide. The other is the Sterigenics plant in Smyrna, with about 30 workers, that sterilizes medical equipment.

Fruit and campaign supporters attended another town hall meeting of over 1,000 people in Cobb County to protest emissions from the Sterigenics facility Aug. 19.

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## Florida prison officials lift ban on 5 issues of 'Militant' after protests

BY SETH GALINSKY

In the face of growing support for the fight against the censorship of the *Militant*, Florida prison officials have rescinded the ban on five issues of the socialist newsweekly. All those who

## Working people in Syria face growing crisis from attacks by Assad regime

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Following months of airstrikes by the Syrian regime and its ally in Moscow, the government of Bashar al-Assad has retaken some key areas in Idlib province that have been under the control of opponents of his dictatorial rule for the past five years. The bombardments exacerbated the disastrous conditions for some 3 million people, many of whom had fled government army assaults in other parts of Syria.

Conflicts are sharpening among the

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support the right of prisoners to read literature of their own choosing can use this victory to strengthen the fight to overturn the ban on eight other issues of the paper.

Issue nos. 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 were banned solely because they included articles reporting on the censoring of previous issues of the *Militant* in Florida prison. Officials alleged that two

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Socialist revolution is 'historical mission of modern proletariat' 8

—On the picket line, p. 5—

Airline catering workers picket Dallas airport in contract fight

Asda store workers in UK rally against concessions contract



# Gov't to give pork bosses sole power over line speed

BY JACOB PERASSO

The Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service is threatening to eliminate its current limit of slaughtering 1,106 hogs per hour in the nation’s pork packing plants and turn inspection there over to the company bosses. This is an attack on the health and safety of workers and the millions

## AS I SEE IT

who consume pork products.

Even under the current “limits,” injuries in meatpacking are high — pork and beef workers are three times more likely to suffer serious injury and seven times more likely to get debilitating repetitive motion injuries than other workers.

For the better part of a decade I worked as a meat cutter in cut-and-kill hog and cattle slaughter and in processing operations in the Upper Midwest. I have seen firsthand what the bosses’ thirst for higher line speed can do. The bosses say eliminating caps on line speeds will give them more “flexibility.”

In fact, it will embolden the bosses to push each worker to cut more pieces per hour, adding to repetitive motion injuries such as carpel tunnel syndrome — to say nothing of exhaustion. Bosses will look to squeeze already stretched utility workers who provide bathroom breaks or give you a few seconds break to fix your knife. They will look to continue imposing last-minute forced overtime and unpredictable schedules.

Packing plants are already atop the list of worksites with the highest injury

rates by official statistics, alongside the postal system, Walmart and UPS. The government admits there are two amputations every week in the packing plants, from fingers to entire arms. Thousands of these injuries go unreported because workers fear retaliation by the bosses.

Ever since the 1980s, the packing bosses have worked to drive down pay and increase line speed to boost profits. As part of these efforts, they have hired increasing numbers of immigrant workers, including many without papers, hoping to divide the workforce and intimidate workers from fighting back.

The government helps efforts by the bosses to divide workers. On Aug. 7, over 600 Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided a number of poultry processing plants in Mississippi, arresting 680 immigrant workers. Many of their co-workers spoke out against the raids.

But the bosses *have* faced resistance. When I worked at Dakota Premium Beef in the Twin Cities, we fought and won a union, and the right to have one of our members monitor the line speed.

Under the new rules the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service wants to impose, the number of federal inspectors at the 40 largest plants — which account for 90% of the nation’s pork — would be reduced by up to 40%. The government says the work they are doing would supposedly be picked up by company employees. That’s exactly what the government allowed on lines producing the Boeing 737 MAX airplane.

Inspectors are supposed to spot and verify removal of infection and contam-



Militant/Jacob Perasso  
**Dakota Premium meatpacking workers march and rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, in June 2000 during fight that won a union and workers’ right to monitor line speed in the plant.**

ination before dangerous elements can enter the food supply. However, they’re hampered by government restrictions, and the speed of the line makes it impossible for them to catch everything. Many workers do their best to spot and remove abscesses and feces. This contributes greatly to food safety.

Some liberals bend over backwards to paint this move as a product of the Trump administration. But this has been in the works under both Democratic and Republican administrations for decades. It is driven by the fact that the capitalist rulers run the government, and they take advantage of the lack of fighting union leadership to increase exploitation.

The only protection we have from increasing line speed and disregard for food safety is union power. Workers need to organize to fight back against speedup and other attacks by the bosses. Out of these skirmishes, we can organize and transform both ourselves and our unions. The Socialist Workers Party champions fighting for workers control of production and safety.

### Gov’t. claims science allows speedup

The Dept. of Agriculture argues that the change in regulation is based on research and science, but it is the same “science” that led to the recall of 12 million pounds of contaminated beef last December; the same “science” now being used by the Federal Railroad

Administration to justify allowing one person “crews” on freight trains, endangering health and safety of rail workers and those who live by the tracks; and the same “science” Mine Safety and Health Administration officials used that has led to a new explosion of black lung disease in the coalfields.

Their “science” is only the cold-blooded calculation of politically tolerable risk to human life and limb. It has nothing to do with eliminating unnecessary injuries, illnesses or death. It is the moral values of the capitalist class, and working people pay the price.

Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara made a crucial point that science and technology don’t exist in a vacuum. Technology is a weapon that serves different classes for different ends, he told workers in Cuba in 1963.

Changes to government inspection regulations will embolden bosses to accelerate production and squeeze more from our blood and sweat. More government regulation is not what we need. We should have no confidence in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, MSHA, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Aviation Administration or any other regulatory agency of the capitalist rulers.

As Guevara pointed out, what we do need is to build an independent working-class movement based on opposite

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# THE MILITANT

## Hong Kong rallies demand political rights

*Working people in Hong Kong fighting for democratic and political rights face Beijing’s determination to tighten its grip on the territory. The ‘Militant’ explains why the Chinese government fears the impact of this struggle on working people elsewhere in China.*



Reuters/Tyrone Siu  
1.7 million protest in Hong Kong Aug. 18.

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# The Militant

**Vol. 83/No. 33**  
**Closing news date:** August 28, 2019

**Editor:** John Studer

**Editorial volunteers:** Róger Calero, Terry Evans, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Martín Koppel, Roy Landersen, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in September.

**Business Manager:** Valerie Johnson

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.  
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**Website:** [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.  
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

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**Australia:** Send A\$70 for one year to Suite 22, 10 Bridge St., Granville NSW 2142, Australia.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.



# ‘Need to defend environment’

Continued from front page

Ethylene oxide is used in manufacturing other chemicals such as antifreeze and to sterilize medical equipment.

In 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency reclassified it as a carcinogen. Two years later it flagged areas in Georgia for elevated risks from exposure to ethylene oxide, but did not notify residents.

Since Georgia Health News and WebMD issued a report July 19 that emissions of the compound in these areas is way beyond what the EPA defines as “acceptable,” residents have organized protests calling for the plants to be shut down.

Denise Williams, an electrician attending the Covington meeting, told the SWP candidate that these plants should be closed. A previously unreported explosion and toxic gas leak in 2018 were revealed in the Aug. 27 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

“Workers and unions can fight for workers control over production and safety to protect those on the job and in nearby communities,” Fruit said.

The SWP candidate told Williams how “black lung disease declined among miners more than 90% after they transformed their union in the late 1960s and ’70s and won more control over working conditions with the power to shut down production to enforce safety.”

She said, “Fights like these are a necessary first step along the road to building unions and a working-class movement that fights for all the oppressed and exploited.” Williams bought a *Militant* subscription.

## Public works program needed

Working people need to fight for “a massive public works program to rebuild the U.K.’s crumbling infrastructure,” Communist League member Hugo Wils told school kitchen worker Lesley Kirkham when he knocked on her door in Whaley Bridge, England, Aug. 17.

Wils and CL member Ogmundur Jonsson were talking with working

people there after the evacuation of 1,500 people when a dam containing 1.4 million tons of water from the nearby Toddbrook Reservoir suffered major damage Aug. 1.

“We’ve had three community meetings since, but we still don’t know what exactly went wrong,” Kirkham told Wils.

“Whatever the exact reason for the dam’s failure, it’s the capitalists’ drive to cut corners to maximize their profits that is the cause of this,” Wils said. Kirkham purchased a copy of the *Militant*.

Other workers the CL members met described how working people looked out for each other after the evacuation order. “The first thing people did was knock on doors of elderly people who normally get home care,” student Anika Drews said. “A friend who lives in the evacuation zone came to live with me with her daughter and cat.”

Jonsson described how working-class solidarity gets extended on a massive scale as working people engage in revolutionary struggle and fight to establish their own government. He pointed to the example of



Militant/Ogmundur Jonsson

Hugo Wils speaking with school kitchen worker Lesley Kirkham in Whaley Bridge, England, Aug. 17. Damage of nearby dam was “caused by capitalists’ drive for profits,” said Wils.

the Cuban Revolution where the government mobilizes working people to get everybody out of harms way and into shelters with adequate provisions when hurricanes hit the island. “Then they mobilize volunteer construction brigades to help in the cleanup and re-

building effort, with cheap or free construction material,” he said. To learn more, Drews signed up for a subscription to the *Militant*.

Janice Lynn in Atlanta contributed to this article.

## Socialist Workers Party 2019 campaign program

*The Socialist Workers Party’s fighting program to confront the economic, social and moral crisis caused by capitalism:*

**UNIONS** Support workers’ struggles to organize and strengthen unions, to use union power to defend ourselves and all working people. *One union for all drivers* — taxi, Uber, Lyft, other app-based and car service drivers! Support farmworkers in their fight to organize unions and for safe working conditions.

**AMNESTY FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS** in the US, a life-and-death question for the unions to unite workers and cut across divisions the bosses use to drive down wages. For access to driver’s licenses for all.

**JOBS** Fight for a federal government-financed public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages building roads, bridges, hospitals, child care centers, mass transportation and quality affordable housing workers need. Set the minimum wage to allow workers to have a home and support a family.

**OPPOSE WASHINGTON’S WARS** US hands off Iran, Venezuela, and Cuba. US troops out of Afghanistan, Korea, the Middle East. End US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.

**CUBA — AN EXAMPLE** End the embargo against Cuba; US out of Guantánamo. The Cuban Revolution in 1959 showed it is possible for workers and farmers to transform themselves in struggle, to take political power and uproot capitalist exploitation.

**HEALTH CARE FOR ALL** Fight for universal, government-guaranteed health care and retirement income for all.

**ABORTION** Defend women’s right to unrestricted access to family planning services, including the right to safe, secure abortions.

**ISRAEL & PALESTINE** For the recognition of Israel and of a contiguous Palestinian state. For the right of Jews to return to Israel as a refuge in the face of capitalist crisis, Jew-hatred, and murderous violence.

**LAND AND LABOR** Capitalism’s profit drive is the despoiler of nature and cause of unsafe working conditions. Workers and our unions must fight for workers control over production and safety in the factories, mines, railroads and all energy monopolies to protect those on the job and in nearby communities, and to control emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases and prevent the poisoning of the air, water and soil. Workers control over production to prevent disasters like the Boeing 737 MAX.

**“JUSTICE” SYSTEM** Fight against police brutality, racist discrimination and the entire capitalist injustice system with its frame-ups, “plea bargains,” onerous bail, and outrageous prison sentences, all of which disproportionately hit workers who are Black. For the right to vote for ex-prisoners and all workers behind bars.

**DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS** Defend democratic rights — the right to vote, to free speech and assembly, and to bear arms, under attack from Democrats and Republicans alike. Stop FBI and other government spying, harassment and disruption.

**PRISONER RIGHTS** End solitary confinement. End censorship of the *Militant*, books and newspapers by prison authorities. Abolish the death penalty, an anti-working-class weapon in the hands of the rulers.

**FARMERS — WORKERS ALLIES ON THE LAND** To put a halt to farm fore-

closures, bankruptcies and skyrocketing rural debt, we demand nationalization of the land. This puts the soil at the service of the farmers who till it, as opposed to control by the banks and landlords. We demand the government guarantee farmers their costs of production, including their living expenses.

*Working people must organize and act independent of the ruling capitalists and break from their political parties — the Democrats and Republicans. A movement of millions can be built to fight for these demands along a course to replace the rule of the exploitative capitalist class with a workers and farmers government.*

*Join the Socialist Workers Party campaign!*

## Hear the SWP candidates

Come meet and hear Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in 2016, and Malcolm Jarrett, SWP candidate for City Council in Pittsburgh, who are speaking and campaigning across the country.

**Sept. 9-12 Seattle**

**Sept. 14-18 Chicago**

See the *Militant* for the next stops on their tour

## Line speedup

Continued from page 2

class values — those of human solidarity, values working people rely on to protect our families, communities and co-workers. We should oppose the recent immigration raids and fight for an amnesty for all undocumented workers to unite working people.

We need to organize solidarity with the miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, who are blocking a coal train there until they receive wages stolen from them by the bankrupt Blackjewel bosses.

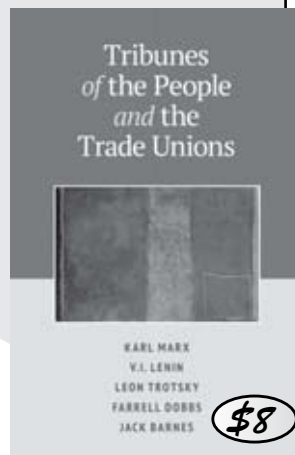
We need to build and strengthen the United Mine Workers union in the mines and the United Food and Commercial Workers union in the packing plants. The UMW set an important example in this country, winning hard fought battles in the 1960s and ’70s that helped establish union safety committees that had the power to shut down production anytime they found mine conditions unsafe. This is what the packing plant workers — and all workers — need.

*Jacob Perasso is a former member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union and a freight rail conductor and member of SMART-TD Local 394 in Selkirk, New York.*

## Tribunes of the People and the Trade Unions

A tribune of the people uses every manifestation of capitalist oppression to explain why it’s workers and our allies who can and will — in the course of struggles by the unions and beyond — lay the foundations for a world based not on violence and competition but on solidarity among working people worldwide.

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# Blackjewel miners win support

Continued from front page

permission to remove the coal. The judge called for an evidentiary hearing in 10 to 14 days before making a ruling on the coal bosses' demand.

"We are wanting our money, not just partial," Darrell Raleigh, a laid-off Blackjewel miner, told WYMT-TV Aug. 23 at the encampment. Kopper Glo Mining has bought the Cloverlick mine subject to government approval and offered workers a paltry \$800 towards unpaid wages, which average over \$4,000 per worker.

"We want our money — the money that's owed to us. We are going to be here, that's a fact. We are not going to move," Raleigh said.

Others echoed Raleigh's response. "I'm standing right there behind my son and the rest of them," Donna Sexton, a home health care worker and Chris Sexton's mother, told the *Militant* Aug. 25. Support for the miners is growing, she noted. Her son said that retired United Mine Workers of America miners have been visiting the camp regularly.

Messages of support can be sent to Harlan County CAA, P.O. Box 1556,

Harlan KY 40831 or emailed to [avar-gas@harlancountycaa.com](mailto:avar-gas@harlancountycaa.com).

Workers' claims always come last in hearings by bankruptcy courts, which exist to protect the interests of the billionaire capitalist families. Coal bosses use the hearings to minimize the losses to themselves, bondholders and other creditors, and to maximize the burden that falls on working people, shedding obligations to pay workers' pensions and other benefits and breaking union contracts. While there are retired United Mine Workers of America miners in Kentucky, there are no longer any UMW-organized mines.

## Decline in coal production

Working people in Appalachia, the coal-rich mountainous region encompassing eastern Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia, are suffering from an economic and social crisis, which the steep decline of coal production in recent years has exacerbated.

The number of workers employed in coal production has fallen 61% over the last 30 years, from 136,400 in 1989 to 52,700 today. And laid-off miners face



Harlan Enterprise/Emily Perkins

Chinese restaurant owner Joyce Cheng, in miner's helmet and jacket, with nurses at Harlan Appalachian Regional Healthcare July 11. She ran 50 miles "asking every person for a dollar" for laid-off Blackjewel miners, raising over \$5,000 for miners' families she knows.

stiff competition looking for work. The official unemployment rate in Harlan County is 13.1%. Statewide it's 5.1%.

In 2010 almost half of U.S. power was generated by coal-fired plants. Last year the figure fell to 27 percent. Cheaper oil and natural gas produced in increasing quantities by shale-fracturing technol-

ogy is displacing the demand for coal.

Officials in some counties blame the drop in tax revenue from coal companies for cuts they are making to services that working people depend on. In some eastern Kentucky and West Virginia counties authorities say they cannot deliver drinkable water to residents. Knott County in eastern Kentucky declared a partial government shutdown in January, and officials there are threatening to cut a meals program for retired workers.

Blackjewel's bankruptcy affected hundreds of miners in Wyoming, on the heels of other bankruptcies in recent years. Six coal companies with Wyoming mines filed for bankruptcy in the past four years. Coal jobs there dropped from over 7,000 in 2011 to some 5,700 last year.

The July 29 Casper, Wyoming, *Star-Tribune* reports that some laid-off Wyoming Blackjewel miners say the bosses frequently issued paychecks late, and stopped issuing retirement payments six weeks before the mine closures. Local businesses with contracts with Blackjewel reported receiving no payment for invoices as well.

# Florida prisons lift ban on 5 issues of 'Militant'

Continued from front page

of the issues encourage "activities which may lead to the use of physical violence or group disruption," and all five issues present "a threat to the security, good order or discipline of the correctional system."

The prison system's Literature Review Committee upheld the bans on issue nos. 24, 25 and 26 before the *Militant's* attorney, David Goldstein, had a chance to appeal the original impoundments by local prison wardens. In Florida, any warden can arbitrarily impound publications until they are reviewed by the committee.

But as more letters opposing censorship arrived — a dozen new letters since Aug. 1 calling on Florida officials to cease the unconstitutional bans — the committee reversed course. On Aug. 19, they overturned their previous decision, without any explanation why they upheld the bans in the first place.

The Florida Press Association, which represents every major paper in the state, was one of the newest backers of the fight against censorship. The committee also received letters from prominent individuals in North Carolina, professors, and more than a dozen Walmart workers in Illinois.

They joined with others who have been backing the fight for months, including Amnesty International-USA, PEN America, the National Coalition Against Prison Censorship, the National Lawyers Guild, the American Civil

Liberties Union-Florida, the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom and many more.

The first ban on the *Militant* the review committee upheld this year was issue no. 15, which featured an article on the New York tour by Albert Woodfox, who spent 40 years in solitary confinement in Louisiana. He is campaigning to abolish solitary confinement. Most of the other issues were banned covering the fight against Florida prison censorship.

In a new twist the impoundment notice of issue no. 29 does not list a single offending article, in violation of the Department of Correction's own rules. It makes the baseless claim that the paper "contains criminal history, offender registration, or other personal information about another inmate or offender."

In addition to listing an article on censorship, the notice for issue no. 30 says "Page 7 Racist." This is a bizarre charge since the only articles on the page dealing with racism point out the need for working people to overcome divisions, including opposition to race-baiting as well as scapegoating of immigrants, to effectively confront the crisis caused by capitalist rule.

In the paper's latest appeal, Aug. 27, Goldstein notes that the true purpose for the impoundments is "to try to ban the *Militant* based on prison officials disagreement with its political and ideological views."

Censorship "breeds resentment and often people draw the conclusion that these censored ideas must be in their interest," Judy Ancel, executive producer of the Heartland Labor Forum, a weekly radio show in Kansas City, wrote the Literature Review Committee Aug. 27. She urged officials to let prisoners "have access to a broad range of literature."

There are fights taking place against censorship in prisons in other states, including a successful ef-

fort to overturn decisions by officials at Danville Correctional Center in Illinois to remove some 200 books from the prison library that they deemed "racially motivated." The titles included Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*.

"The end of the ban on five issues of the *Militant* is a big victory," said *Militant* editor John Studer. "Now is the time to step up the effort to involve more organizations, prominent individuals and co-workers in sending letters to Florida prison authorities calling on them to lift all the bans. Every victory against prison censorship of the *Militant* will aid similar fights around the country."

## Communications Workers hold four day strike across 9 states

BY AMY HUSK

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Some 20,000 workers, members of Communications Workers of America District 3, went on strike against AT&T in nine states Aug. 24-27. They included technicians, customer service representatives and others who install, maintain and support AT&T's residential and business wireline telecommunications in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Picket lines were up in at least nine locations here. Workers' spirits on Bardstown Road and Chestnut Street Aug. 26 were not dampened by pouring rain. In both locations bus drivers, truck drivers, and many others slowed down and honked loudly to show their support for the strikers.

The Teamsters union issued a statement of support to the CWA strike, and workers on the picket line at Bardstown Road reported that Teamster drivers were refusing to drive into AT&T lots.

The CWA filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National La-

bor Relations Board against AT&T for not bargaining "in good faith" and not sending representatives to contract negotiations with the authority to make decisions. The union's previous contract with the company expired Aug. 3.

The union says the company proposal calls for a mandatory stand-by system, forcing workers to work at any time. It also demands subcontracting out construction work, eliminating seniority if the company lays off workers and reducing sick pay.

"We have to schedule sick days two weeks in advance. We get two on-demand sick days a year," Thomas Jackson, an AT&T wire technician for four years, told the *Militant* at the Bardstown picket line.

Union officials announced the strike was over Aug. 28 and workers would be returning to their jobs later that day. Terms of the settlement have not been made public.

A separate strike by CWA members at AT&T in Florida began Aug. 22 after the company disciplined workers for wearing union insignia, the union's website reports.

### Fight prison censorship!

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# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

Are you involved in a union organizing drive or strike? Brought solidarity to fellow workers on the picket line? Let us know! Send articles, photos and letters to [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com) or through our website, or mail them to 306 W. 37th St., 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.

## Airline catering workers picket Dallas airport in contract fight

EULESS, Texas — Several hundred airline catering workers employed at LSG Skycheffs from cities across the country joined a lively informational picket line near the American Airlines headquarters outside the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport Aug. 13. The unionists, members of UNITE HERE, are fighting for a new contract. They say they are targeting American because it is LSG's biggest customer.

Barry Sahi, a hotel housekeeper, came on a bus with 28 other unionists from San Antonio. He described having to work double shifts. "The corporations make more money and we deserve to get paid more," he said.

Nearly half of LSG Skycheffs workers receive \$11.35 an hour or less and can't afford their employers' health insurance plans, according to UNITE HERE. The union represents some 18,000 catering workers at airports nationwide.

The 11,000 union members working for LSG, including 926 at Dallas-Fort Worth airport, voted in June to authorize a strike. Airline workers like rail workers face anti-working-class legislation under the Railway Labor Act, which is designed to restrict workers' right to strike.

— George Chalmers

## Asda store workers in U.K. rally against concessions contract

LEEDS, England — Hundreds of Asda store workers marched here Aug. 14 past the company's headquarters to protest a new concessions contract with the retail chain.

It would allow bosses to arbitrarily switch workers' shift schedules and eliminate pay for breaks, cut night shift and holiday pay and mandate work on public holidays.

Bus organized by the GMB union brought workers to the protest from throughout the U.K., including from

London, Cumbria, Doncaster, Peterborough and Scotland.

Workers, some with more than 20 years at Asda, said that the new contract means that they will have to leave their jobs.

Julie Wival, who came on a bus from Peterborough, told the *Militant* that many Asda workers will not be able to work these new shifts as they are single mothers or care for relatives. The bosses "tell us that if we don't sign, we will be terminated," she said.

"Asda makes more than £700 million a year [\$860 million]," said Mathew McAlpine from Peterlee. "It is our hard work that creates that. But they keep changing our terms."

— Dag Tirsén



Militant/Hilda Cuzzo

Hundreds of airline catering workers, working for LSG Skycheffs, rally near American Airlines headquarters by Dallas-Fort Worth airport Aug. 13, demanding wage raises and new contract.

## Toronto cop who killed youth paroled after only two years

BY STEVE PENNER

TORONTO — The Parole Board of Canada Aug. 13 granted day release to imprisoned former cop James Forcillo, less than two years into his six-and-a-half-year sentence for killing Sammy Yatim in 2013. This ruling was a topic of discussion among working people who Communist League candidates Pierre-Luc Filion and Steve Penner met as they campaigned here a few days later.

Yatim, an 18-year-old Syrian immigrant, was alone on a streetcar brandishing a small knife and appeared to be in a disturbed mental state when Forcillo shot him nine times.

A public outcry and a series of protests forced authorities to charge Forcillo, who was tried and convicted of attempted murder in 2016. Over 460 people were killed by cops in Canada between 2000 and 2017, according to CBC News, but Forcillo is one of only two cops convicted for any of these killings.

Yatim's family says they were shocked by the parole board's decision.

Penner, the Communist League's candidate for the federal riding of Papineau

in Montreal, and Filion, its candidate in the Montreal riding of Longueuil-St. Hubert, campaigned in York Township, Toronto, the day after the announcement of Forcillo's discharge. Several working people there told the CL candidates they were opposed to Forcillo's early release.

"No one jailed for murder gets out of prison after less than two years," said Amerigo, a retired construction worker.

Truck driver Shane Rickett told Filion and Penner that Forcillo's release from prison shows that the police "can get away with doing whatever they want."

Rickett, who is black, said he thought that having "more people of color" on the police force might help.

Filion pointed out that Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders is black and his appointment hasn't done anything to change the anti-working-class or racist character of the cops.

"Giving more money to the cops is not going to help," Rickett said. The municipal, provincial and federal government announced a \$4.5 million increase in funding for Toronto cops Aug. 13. Saunders said the money was needed

for the cops to respond to a rise in gang-related shootings. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed the funding package would "keep Canadians safer."

Rickett got a copy of a statement the CL candidates released Aug. 15. "Trudeau's proposals are aimed at working people," Penner says in the release. "More police mean more arbitrary arrests, frame-ups and cop violence against us — especially black and Indigenous workers."

In the statement Filion explains, "There's only one way to respond to anti-social violence. When working people in our millions stand up and fight for better working conditions, against police brutality, for women's rights, against imperialism's wars around the world — when we fight for something and win — crime and senseless acts of violence will diminish."

Filion said that to bring about fundamental change working people need to wage a fight to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish their own government.

"That's what we need," Rickett said. "The masses shouldn't have to live in fear. They should be able to live in dignity." He encouraged the CL candidates to return for more discussion and bought a 12-week subscription to the *Militant* and the book *The Clintons' Anti-Working-Class Record: Why Washington Fears Working People* by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



September 12, 1994

Hundreds of working people, joined by youth and others, have organized picket lines in dozens of cities demanding the U.S. government get out of Guantánamo, end its criminal economic and information embargo against Cuba, and stop its lies about the Cuban revolution. More protest actions like these are needed. More efforts are necessary to organize educational meetings and distribute the books and newspapers that tell the truth about Cuba and the achievements of its socialist revolution.

Washington is not wavering from acting on its almost 35-year-long strategic goal to weaken, divide, and ultimately overthrow the government and communist leadership in Cuba.

[Fidel] Castro speaks the truth, with historic insight, when he insists that "socialism or death" has become the first, and only, line of defense of the Cuban revolution.



September 12, 1969

Turbulence within the United Mine Workers continues to give the incumbent president, W.A. Boyle, a bit more trouble. By August 20 a strike which had begun at the Humphrey No. 7 mine of Consolidated Coal Co. a week before over the firing of five local UMW officials, had spread to 28 mines, involving 7,000 men. Among the struck mines were captive mines belonging to U.S. Steel Corp. and Jones & Laughlin Steel.

UMW top officials immediately rushed into the strike area around Fairmont, W. Va., in an attempt to force the miners back to work. U.S. Steel has instituted a damage suit against the union for \$123,000 a day. UMW heads maintain the strike is unauthorized.

All of which puts Boyle in a bind. One of the charges being used against him by his opposition candidate, Joseph Yablonski, is that Boyle "is overly protective of coal company interests."



September 9, 1944

The Allied conquerors, who are seeking to replace the Nazi tyrants with their own imperialist rule in France, reveal increasing alarm over the revolutionary ferment among the French working masses. Anglo-American authorities are maintaining a rigorous political censorship over news from France, in an endeavor to conceal the true state of mass unrest. The Allies regard the independent action of the French masses, who were set into motion by the insurrections against the Nazis and their French capitalist collaborators, as a grave threat not merely to their military-political control over France but to the whole capitalist structure.

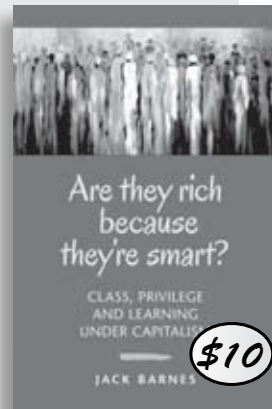
This mood of unrest is being aggravated as the demands of the masses for bread, jobs, peace and real freedom come into collision with the counter-revolutionary plans of the Allied rulers and their French agents.

## Are They Rich Because They're Smart?

*Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism*

by Jack Barnes

"Only through the organization of working people can we begin to transform ourselves and our attitudes towards life and work and each other."



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# Puerto Rico crisis of colonial rule

Continued from front page

countryside, for the first time easily visible from the main highways.

Two years later the leaves are back as lush as ever and many houses have been repaired. But tens of thousands remain damaged, some roofless, covered for two years with blue tarps meant to last 30 days, or abandoned despite the billions of dollars in “aid” received by the colonial regime in this U.S. colony.

The SWP delegation of Alyson Kennedy, the party’s 2016 candidate for U.S. president, currently a Walmart worker in Dallas; Seth Galinsky, the party’s candidate for New York City public advocate; and Linda Joyce, a campaign supporter from Atlanta, spent five days talking to working people, and exchanging views on what can be done to defend their interests.

Our trip came just a few weeks after 15 days of massive demonstrations forced the resignation of Gov. Ricardo Rosselló at the end of July. They showed the potential power working people have when they organize and unite.

Lenis Rodríguez, a worker in Yabucoa; Raúl “Ruly” Laboy, a retired electrician from nearby Humacao; as well as Rosalina Abreu and Mildred Laboy, president and vice president of Arecma, the Recreational and Educational Community Association of Mariana Neighborhood in Humacao introduced us to workers in the area. Party members John Studer and Martín Koppel had met them here last year.

Rodríguez introduced us to Morales. Though her family of fishermen has lived in El Negro for decades, like thousands of others across the island she doesn’t have official title to her home. On the pretext that the neighborhood is on a nature reserve, the government has never allowed her to connect to the electric grid, even though a power line runs right down the street in front of her house.

Unlike many of the thousands without title to their homes, Morales, who made her living fishing until she was hurt in an accident, was able to get \$15,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin rebuilding. “But that wasn’t near enough,” she noted. “That’s why I’m still doing most of the work myself.”

When a nonprofit group put on a new roof and installed solar panels, Morales’ home had electricity for the first time. But an inverter, a key component, broke. “It costs \$600,” she said, which she

doesn’t have, so she doesn’t have power.

Morales didn’t join the protests against Rosselló, but she doesn’t like either of the two main capitalist parties in Puerto Rico — the Popular Democratic Party and the New Progressive Party. “They’re all sharks going after the small fish,” she said.

Life for fishermen wasn’t easy before Hurricane Maria, Julio Angel Morales Alicea, secretary of the Yabucoa Fishermen’s Association, told us Aug. 18 as he prepared to head out to sea.

After the hurricane “the government left us on our own,” he said. Before the storm the association ran a pescadería by the boat ramp, where they cleaned and sold fish to the community. The couple dozen or so small fishermen in the association shared the work, expenses and income. The cooperative was built on land rented from the Yabucoa municipal government. “We did up to a \$1 million in sales a year,” he said.

But the building was badly damaged in the storm. And the mayor of Yabucoa, instead of helping to rebuild, revoked their lease. “Now we sell our catch on the side of the road,” he said.

The government claims that electricity has been restored 100%. But the day before, Morales Alicea said, his neighborhood was without electricity for six hours. Such blackouts are common. The roads in the wealthier neighborhoods have been repaired, he said, “but you saw the potholes on the way here.”

## ‘Gov’t is corrupt, incompetent’

“I agree with President Donald Trump on one thing,” Morales Alicea told us. “He said that the government of Puerto Rico is corrupt and incompetent. “Look around, where did all the aid money go?” he asked. He joined the protests against Rosselló.

While the island’s population has been shrinking for a decade as tens of thousands move to the U.S., we ran into many workers who have worked in the U.S. or go back and forth between the two countries. The use of English is common.

In Punta Santiago, near where Hurricane Maria made landfall, every street still has damaged and abandoned homes. Hearing salsa music from one home, we stopped and introduced ourselves.

We spoke with Karelys Velázquez, a nurse, and her husband Eduardo Alberto López. When we pointed out that workers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico face similar capitalist exploitation, their neighbor Nelson Martínez jumped in.

“I know. I’ve worked in the fields in the U.S. picking vegetables and in the Tyson chicken processing plants in Arkansas,” he said. He described the breakneck line speed at the Tyson plant. He worked with a lot of Mexican workers without papers, he said, who are hired to keep wages down.

## Crisis of colonial rule

In 2016 President Barack Obama signed bipartisan legislation imposing the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico. Its purpose is to maximize payment on some \$74 billion in debt the colonial regime owes to wealthy bondhold-



Top, unrepaired home in Yabucoa two years after Hurricane Maria. “What did government do with millions in aid?” said fisherman Julio Morales. Below, Karelys Velázquez and neighbor Nelson Martínez in Punta Santiago discuss common challenges facing workers in U.S. and Puerto Rico with SWP delegation.

ers. The Junta, as it is called here, can override all local government decisions.

Puerto Rico’s gross domestic product has declined every year except once since 2006.

It took a year before electricity was restored in many areas. In the face of government inaction, working people across the island held protests to demand light, and helped each other out, clearing fallen trees from the roads, repairing each other’s homes, even setting up communal dining halls where storm survivors could get a good meal, which is what Arecma did in Humacao.

When secret online “chats” of Rosselló and his closest advisers became public, showing their scorn for working people, the pent-up anger burst as hundreds of thousands took to the streets to demand his resignation. Government officials implicated in corruption or other political skulduggery in the chats began resigning.

Few workers believe new Gov. Wanda Vázquez will be much different. But many hope the size of the demonstrations against Rosselló will cause her to think twice before im-

posing new anti-worker measures.

The mass protests have many working people thinking about which way forward.

Twenty longtime supporters of the fight against U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico from a half-dozen small towns in the Humacao area responded to an invitation by leaders of Arecma to meet the Socialist Workers Party delegation.

They wanted to learn more about the party, including the international current the party represents, the party’s view of what is happening in the class struggle in the United States and how to continue to work together to advance the interests of the working class in both countries.

Among those who came were school teachers, small farmers, and construction and other workers, supporters of a wide range of pro-independence organizations.

Kennedy and Galinsky described the party’s support for the fight for independence for Puerto Rico, going back to the founding of the communist party in the U.S. in 1919. “We believe that working people in the U.S. can’t

Continued on page 7



Some 20 opponents of U.S. colonial rule in Puerto Rico exchanged views with Socialist Workers Party delegation visiting Mariana neighborhood of Humacao Aug. 17 at invitation of Arecma community group. From left, Rosalina Abreu, Arecma president; retired teacher Mildred Laboy; farmer Julio Antonio Rivera; and unidentified participant.

# ‘New York Times’ says race-baiting can topple Trump

Continued from front page

said. That “is the vision for coverage for the next two years,” through the 2020 elections. Then they hope to have a new “story.”

The meeting was called after the paper ran a factual headline, “Trump Urges Unity Vs. Racism,” over a story on a statement by Trump after the deadly El Paso shootings. This headline led to a firestorm of criticism from both readers and staff. The paper’s headlines and stories, they cried, have to label Trump and the workers who voted for him as racists and “white supremacists.”

Not only will the *Times* take this mission on — though with perhaps a little more “nuance” than some would like, Baquet said — but they’ll also change their “story” about all of U.S. history to fit their race-baiting.

The *Times* “will publish the 1619 Project, the most ambitious examination of the legacy of slavery ever undertaken,” Baquet said. “to try to understand the forces that led to the election of Donald Trump.”

The paper’s Aug. 14 edition proclaimed that the series would “reframe the country’s history,” with everything informed by slavery.

## The ‘Times’ new ‘story’

Typical of the paper’s new “story” is an op-ed column in the Aug. 14 issue by Joe Walsh, who is standing against Trump for the Republican nomination. “Trump is a racial arsonist who encourages bigotry and xenophobia to rouse his base and advance his electoral prospects,” Walsh screams.

This same shift to anti-working-class



Eastern Airlines strikers and supporters march in New York, September 1989. In efforts to oust President Trump, *Times* is rewriting history to place the question of ‘racism’ at the center of all politics, obscuring common interests of working people of all nationalities.

race-baiting is well underway in other media organs of the pro-Democratic Party anti-Trump “resistance” — from the *Washington Post* to the Workers World Party paper, which claims he heads a “fascistic movement.”

Claims of a rise in white supremacist attitudes in the working class obscure the real cause of disaffection with the candidates of both capitalist parties — the carnage from decades of grinding economic and social crisis presided over by Democratic and Republican administrations alike. This is key to understanding politics in the U.S., or anywhere else — the sharply counterposed class interests between the capitalist rulers and the working class.

# Workers in Puerto Rico face crisis of colonial rule

Continued from page 6

be free as long as the government that oppresses us maintains Puerto Rico as a colony,” Kennedy said.

“Working people face the same problems and the same opportunities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico,” Galinsky said. “We need to build a fighting working-class movement, to organize independently of the capitalist parties, their state and their government.”

Our party believes the revolution made by working people in Cuba in 1959 is an example for us both in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico and points the road forward for how the people in Puerto Rico can wrest their independence from the rulers in Washington.

Kennedy presented meeting organizers with a solidarity message from some three dozen of her Dallas Walmart co-workers.

After the meeting the delegation joined a festival, enjoying performances by local musicians and home-cooked food, a fundraiser for a young resident of Marianas leaving for Boston to further his talents as a player of the cuatro, a traditional 10-stringed guitar.

## Exploitation by big Pharma

We met Adamaris Cruz, 25, there. She moved back to Humacao after serving eight months in the U.S. Army and being discharged after injuring her ankle. Cruz is a temporary worker at one of the dozens of pharmaceutical companies that dot the island, making just \$7.25 an hour, the

There is less racism among working people today, not more. This is a result of “the mass, proletarian-led movement for Black rights in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s.” Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explains in *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

## Attack on class consciousness

Far from advancing the fight against racist discrimination, the *Times* 1619 series minimizes the real record of the struggle against it, from slave revolts to the Civil War — the Second American Revolution — to the fight against Jim Crow and the mass Black-led battle that overthrew it.

Nikole Hannah-Jones, organizer

of the 1619 Project, says, “Anti-black racism runs in the very DNA of this country.” In other words, if you’re Caucasian and from the U.S. you must be racist, and drenched with “white privilege.”

Race-baiting is a scourge used by the capitalists and their meritocratic enablers like the *Times* to try and shut up and attack the political rights of those they disagree with — above all the “deplorable” workers they fear.

The *Times* editors seek to “reframe” history from the standpoint of the class they are part of, deflecting attention from the bloody rise of capitalist exploitation, and how the capitalist rulers use racism and every other form of prejudice to try and keep workers divided and intensify competition among us.

The *Times* new version of history also denies the significance of the revolution of 1776 that freed the country from the stultifying grip of the British crown, paving the way for the further development of capitalism and with it the modern working class, and inspiring toilers worldwide.

As V.I. Lenin, central leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, said, the American Revolution was one of history’s great, liberating revolutionary wars.

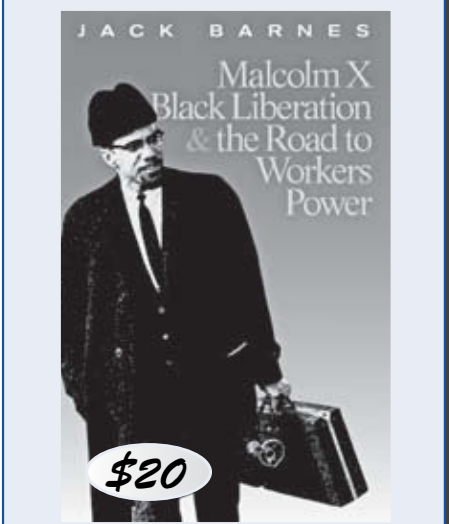
It was revolutionary class struggles that were crucial at all the turning points in the history of the U.S. And they will be in the future.

Above all what the *Times* view of history obscures is the growth of self-confidence and fighting capacities of workers who took part in these battles. And how this deepened their class consciousness as they came to see and act towards other working people as fellow fighters.

The *Times* editors and the class they write for seek to keep workers ensnared in the capitalist rulers’ two-party system, to prevent us from organizing to fight against capitalist exploitation and oppression. They aim above all to prevent us from gaining class consciousness and self-confidence in a united fight to take political power into our own hands.

## Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes

“The meritocracy fear someday being ruled by those they worry could become the ‘great mob’: the toiling and producing majority.” — Jack Barnes



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# Socialist revolution is ‘historical mission of modern proletariat’

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific by Frederick Engels is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for September. Engels was the lifelong political collaborator of Karl Marx in founding the modern international communist movement. This title was first published in 1880. The excerpts are from the 1972 introduction by George Novack (1905-92), a leader of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 1972, 2008 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The material source of the conflict between capital and labor is their ceaseless struggle over the division of the social surplus product in the form of the new value that is added to the total wealth produced by the laboring population. The profits of the capitalist stand in inverse ratio to the wages of the workers.

Competition among the owners of capital is the driving force of the system's progress, of the unprecedented development of its productive energies, of its restless expansion, and of its anarchy. The bigger and more powerful capitalists crowd out or gobble up the weaker and smaller ones. Engels clearly discerned how freedom of competition was giving way to its op-



Imaginechina via AP Images

Garment workers in Heze, China, in 2018. The industrial workforce is “the class that is the foundation and special product of capitalism,” writes SWP leader George Novack. It is also “destined to take charge of the economy and remodel society from top to bottom.”

posite, the extension of monopoly, as the inexorable outcome of the centralization and concentration of capital.

Capitalist competition on home grounds was complemented by fierce rivalries between national capitalist interests in the international arena. These exploded periodically in armed conflicts between the great powers for the possession of colonies, fields of investment, and supremacy in the world market.

All these tendencies of capitalism, from monopolist domination to imperialist wars — which Engels viewed from the vantage point of the end of the nineteenth century — have attained their consummate development in our own time.

So long as the capitalists owned the means of production and operated them for private profit, either directly as individuals and corporations or indirectly through the state they controlled, all the evils of the system — exploitation, unemployment, crises, poverty, wars, discrimination, and inhumanity — would not only persist, but grow worse, said Engels. The massive productive forces summoned into being by modern science and technology had outgrown the national boundaries and the capability of the capitalist class to manage them. They called for a different kind of or-

ganizer and a better social planner.

The new social power destined to take charge of the economy and remodel society from top to bottom is the class that is the foundation and special product of capitalism as well as its victim and main opponent. That is the industrial work force.

The working class goes through its own special processes of economic, political, and cultural maturation. Competition for jobs is no less severe among the workers than competition for markets among the capitalists. The principal weapon used by the bosses against the workers is unemployment, which intensifies the divisions among the workers. The only means they have to protect their vital interests is collective organization. Capitalism brings together, unifies, and disciplines the workers for its own mercenary purposes and then compels the workers to combine in self-defense against the employers' attacks upon their wages and working conditions.

They first band together into trade unions and later form their own political parties. Through these agencies the masses of workers seek to make their situation more tolerable under the rule of capital. However, the miseries, insecurities, crises, and wars of the system keep pitting them against its upholders. Socialist understanding

heightens and clarifies their class consciousness and enters as a more and more active factor in shaping the class struggle. Once the majority of workers come to realize that reforms do not suffice to meet their needs and satisfy their aspirations — and the ruling class bares its teeth in reaction and retaliation — they have no recourse but to rise in rebellion.

The proletarian revolution is the inevitable outgrowth of the economic processes and irrepressible conflicts within capitalism. It provides the only enduring and progressive solution of the contradictions between socialized production and private appropriation, between the mode of production and the form of exchange, that underlie the crises of capitalism.

The world revolution for socialism is the historical successor to the earlier revolution that enabled the capitalists to achieve global domination. “To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat,” concluded Engels. “To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.” ...

The profound insight into the dynamics of the class struggle contained in this brilliant little book logically issues in a call for organization and action. Capitalism is an indispensable but transitory stage in the onward march of humankind, asserted Engels. This social formation has changed from an accelerator of progress into a baneful brake upon human culture. The working class has no alternative but to conquer power in order to eliminate the twin curses of private property and the wage system.

Only the triumphant proletarian revolution can clear the road to a classless society. Then, at last, long-suffering humanity will be the master of nature and its own social organization, and its full creative capacities will be released to beautify a bountiful world. This will mark “the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.”

### September BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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— **SWP CAMPAIGN STATEMENT** —

# Organize workers to defend class interests

*The following statement was issued Aug. 28 by Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City public advocate.*

Working people from New York and Puerto Rico to the coalfields of Appalachia and the Powder River Basin face attacks by the bosses and their cops, courts and government. We don’t have to accept this state of affairs.

Today there are examples of working people standing up to defend our interests — like Blackjewel miners in Harlan County, Kentucky, thrown out on the street after bosses declared bankruptcy. Miners are preventing the company from shipping out coal until they get the pay they’re owed.

Wherever workers are standing up to the bosses’ assaults we can organize to bring solidarity. Every act of solidarity helps unify the working class and strengthens our ability to stand up and fight.

The capitalist rulers’ efforts to make us pay for the crisis of their system has no end. As competition sharpens between bosses at Walmart and their retail competitors, they tighten their squeeze on the workers to maximize their profits. Rail workers confront bosses operating longer and longer trains with fewer workers, making conditions increasingly dangerous. Federal officials plan to grant the packing bosses’ demands to end all limits on line speeds in pork processing plants, further threatening workers’ lives and limbs.

The Blackjewel miners have been winning widespread support and aid, from retired United Mine Workers union members, churches, small businesses, other unions and individual workers. What we do makes a difference! Win your co-workers, family and friends to offering solidarity for this working-class struggle and others like it.

As workers organize together we gain experience

and become more confident, like our fellow workers in Puerto Rico did when their mass actions brought down the governor.

We develop consciousness of our power as a class. We learn how to fight in a disciplined way. We see more clearly how our interests are tied together with those of fellow working people around the world.

Two years ago U.S. colonial rulers and the capitalist government in Puerto Rico left working people there to fend for themselves, in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Now another hurricane threatens to wreak more havoc. Working people in Puerto Rico and the U.S. have common interests in fighting for an end to U.S. colonial rule and cancelling Puerto Rico’s \$74 billion debt.

The capitalists want to convince us to see each other as the problem, not their exploitative system and the crises and wars it breeds. To look out for “number one.”

The Socialist Workers Party candidates do the opposite. Our program is aimed at advancing the unity of working people, to point a road forward together against our common enemy: the capitalist system.

That’s why we demand amnesty for all immigrants in the U.S. without papers. That would open the door wide so they can more easily join in struggles for higher pay, safer conditions and for dignity without the fear of deportation. This will put all workers in a stronger position.

The Socialist Workers Party campaign organizes to involve other workers in every union fight and social protest in the interests of the working class.

Through common struggle we become different people, more conscious that working people are part of the exploited class that creates the wealth that the capitalists take away from us. That we are capable of overturning capitalist rule and taking power into our own hands.

# Syria: Toilers face crisis

**Continued from front page**  
rival capitalist governments intervening in Syria. The governments of Russia and Iran back the efforts of Bashar al-Assad to reimpose his control over the country; Turkish rulers have sent troops to intervene in northern Syria, backed armed groups fighting Assad and sought to deal blows to Syrian Kurds fighting for their national rights; and the Israeli rulers are stepping up their airstrikes on bases that Tehran has established inside Syria.

Washington, with about 1,000 troops in northeastern Syria in areas controlled by Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, seeks to defend its imperialist interests and counter the Iranian government’s military presence and political influence in the country.

Syrian government troops captured the strategic town of Khan Sheikhoun and surrounding areas in Idlib Aug. 20. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a reactionary Islamist group which had been administering the area since January, fled after days of heavy fighting. Militias backed by the Iranian rulers reinforced Moscow’s airstrikes on the area.

Khan Sheikhoun lies along the main road connecting Damascus and Aleppo, two of Syria’s biggest cities under government control.

A “de-escalation” agreement between the governments of Iran, Russia and Turkey over fighting in Idlib in 2017 permitted the establishment of Turkish troops at 12 military outposts in and around the province aimed at protecting opposition forces that the Turkish government backs. The pact also demanded that all Islamist groups relinquish heavy arms and leave the area. When they didn’t comply with the commands of Moscow and Assad, the Russian government unleashed massive airstrikes in the area.

Syrian warplanes fired at a Turkish military post in the village of Morek Aug. 22. Days earlier airstrikes had targeted a Turkish army convoy, killing three civilians and wounding 12. In response, the Turkish government sent additional armored vehicles and troops to its outposts in Idlib, Anadolu Agency reported.

These attacks “could test the strength of military cooperation between Turkey and Russia,” noted the *Wall Street Journal*. The Turkish government recently began receiving S-400 antiaircraft missile equipment from Moscow, provoking the ire of Washington, its NATO “ally.”

Since late April, airstrikes and rocket fire have killed more than 700 civilians in Idlib, according to the United Nations. Hundreds of others have been wounded.

Over the past three months more than half a million people have fled their homes, camping along roads, in olive groves and orchards near the Turkish border. Many face dire conditions without tents or shelter from the summer heat. Since 2016 the Turkish government has shut its border to Syrian refugees trying to enter the country.

The eight-year-long civil war in Syria has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced more than 10 million. It followed a powerful uprising by working people who fought to overturn Assad’s repressive rule in 2011. He crushed their rebellion, but different opposition forces, including Islamist groups, took up arms and seized control of large parts of the country.

## Turkish gov’t targets Syrian refugees

During the civil war, some 3.6 million people from Syria have taken refuge in Turkey. They are required to register in the Turkish province where they reside. While many live in areas bordering Syria, hundreds of thousands of others have moved to Istanbul, Turkey’s largest city, in search of work.

Turkish authorities have stepped up the arrest of Syrian immigrants “during raids on homes or workplaces, as well as during ID checks in the streets,” reported Al Jazeera. In Istanbul alone thousands have been detained in recent weeks. The Turkish government demands the 350,000 Syrian immigrants living in Istanbul who are registered in other cities must return there by Oct. 30.

It disputes claims by human rights groups that it is deporting Syrians back to war-torn areas of the country, claiming that those who are leaving Turkey do so “voluntarily.” However the “voluntary return document,” that cops press refugees to sign is written in Turkish, a language that many Syrians can’t read.

— **MILITANT  
LABOR  
FORUMS** —

**GEORGIA**  
**Atlanta**  
**‘India, Get Out of Our Country!’ What’s Behind India’s Takeover of Kashmir.** Speaker: Susan Lamont, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 6, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. S.W., Suite 103. Tel: (678) 528 7828.

**KENTUCKY**  
**Louisville**  
**Hong Kong Mass Protests and the Formation of New Working-Class Fighters in China.** Speakers: Jacquie Henderson, Socialist Workers Party and Samir Hazboun, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor of Kentucky. Sat., Sept. 7.  
**End Florida Prison Bans on the ‘Militant.’ End Denial of Voting Rights for Ex-Prisoners in Kentucky.** Speakers include Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Kentucky governor. Sat., Sept. 14. Both events: reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 1939 Goldsmith Lane, Suite 134. Tel: (502) 882 1041.

— **LETTERS** —

## Stigma of mental illness

Thank you for comments on the capitalist misuse of mental illness in the article on the mass shootings. Their attitude only serves to increase the stigma that divides working people.

Homelessness, hospitalization and incarceration are often the fate of those suffering from mental illness. Brutality at the hands of uncomprehending cops takes place all too often. Suicide rates among them are rising.

Too often, insurance does not cover needed services. And the services that do exist are woefully inadequate.  
*David Hurst,*  
*Fort Myers, Florida*

**Israeli rulers bomb Tehran’s bases in Syria and Iraq**

The Israeli Defense Forces unleashed airstrikes on Iranian Quds Forces and militias allied with Tehran in Aqraba, Syria, Aug. 24, claiming their bombardment had thwarted a “large-scale attack of multiple killer drones on Israel.”

The following day two drones that Lebanese officials say were launched by Israeli forces crashed in Beirut, Lebanon, near an office of Hezbollah, an ally of Tehran.

Tel Aviv seeks to push back the expanding military and political influence of the Iranian regime in Iraq and Syria. The Iranian rulers’ intervention in conflicts there extends abroad the counterrevolution they carried out at home in the early 1980s, pushing back gains made by working people during the 1979 Iranian Revolution that toppled the U.S.- backed shah of Iran.

In July the Israeli Defense Forces bombed Tehran’s rocket bases in Iraq. Israeli spy agencies claim that Tehran has stationed missiles in Iraq that are capable of striking Israel. Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, calls for the destruction of Israel and the driving of Jews into the sea. Hamas, the governing party in the Gaza Strip, and Hezbollah share his Jew-hating tirades.

The attacks come as Washington steps up its pressure on Tehran, tightening the sanctions it imposes that intensify the economic and social crisis bearing down on working people in Iran.

— **TERRY EVANS**

**‘Militant’ schedule**

This is a two-week issue. *Militant* no. 34 will be mailed out September 12.